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EDITORIAL NOTES

OF UTMOST IMPORTANCE!

For your own benefit and protection, *please re-
member these facts:*

The large majority of suits for damages for al-
leged malpractice which we are called upon to
defend, are based upon an alleged improper treat-
ment of a fracture.

In every case of fracture that comes to you for
professional treatment, see that an *X-ray plate is
made and that you keep it in your possession; do
not give it to the patient.*

Whenever possible, have some other physician see
the patient with you, make a careful examination
of the fracture, and *be able to testify that it was
properly set and bandaged.*

Use the flouroscope if you like, but in addition
be sure to have a plate made; it will remain a
permanent record of the condition at the time it
was taken.

In two instances where suits were brought, the
member had thoughtlessly given the X-ray plates to
the patient and of course the patient would not
produce them; they were "lost."

In 1896, Dr. Jones gave a demonstration of
the then very new X or Roentgen rays before the
San Francisco County Medical Society. In the

course of his remarks he expressed the opinion
that the time would come when any physician who
treated a fracture case without making an X-ray
examination of it, would render himself liable to
a suit for damages. Many of those present ridi-
culed this opinion and one went so far as to
deplore the discovery of the X-rays, saying that
they would make surgeons less careful and less
skillful. Carelessness in this regard—not taking
and keeping an X-ray plate—has cost the Society
\$4,000 in the defense of suits which came about
more or less as predicted.

To put it graphically, this carelessness has cost
each individual member almost two dollars, for
the money for defense comes out of our pockets;
the more the work costs the Society, the higher is
the required assessment.

*Have an X-ray plate made in every case of
fracture.*

Keep the plate—don't give it to the patient.

Have a consultant if possible.

These things are for your own protection and
a little care and thought may keep you from a
great deal of trouble and loss of time and annoy-
ance in the future.

*Also, see that your dues are paid promptly be-
fore March 1st.*

PUBLIC HEALTH.

If memory is not at fault, it was Mr. Roosevelt
who started the National Conservation movement
and suggested that the health and lives of the
citizens of our country represented a something
the conservation of which was quite as important
as that of coal or lumber. These Conservation
Congresses have continued; the fifth is to be held
in Washington November 18, 19 and 20. In this
connection it is equally interesting to note that
the President, Mr. Wilson, seems to look upon
election planks as real, material things, and upon
the promise of his party to extend public health
legislation by the congress as something that must
receive attention. Mr. Wilson is too broad a
thinker not to realize the importance and the
value to all the people, of a broad and well-
developed public health service. How it may be
done is of little consequence; a department, a
bureau, a service; it is all the same as to name,
so long as the machinery and the funds and the
men are provided to do the work and to safeguard
properly health and life. It really looks as
though there would be some congressional activity
in the matter of public health work.